Player's Guide

For Commodore 64™ and 128™ and MS-DOS® Computers

ACTIVISION

Credits

F-14 TOMCAT was developed by Dynamix: Kevin Ryan and Nick Skrepetos, programmers; John Burton and Tom Collie, artists; Jeff Tunnell, director; Bryce Morsello, sound and music.

C64 version produced by Terry Ishida and John Skeel.

MS-DOS version produced by Mark Johnson, Mike Suarez, and Michael Latham.

Product marketing by Kelly Flock.

Product testing by Tom Bellamy, Steve Imes, Mike Norton, and John Van.

Player's Guide by Larry Hall, with contributions from Terry Ishida and Dynamix.

Package concept and design by Bob Schonfisch. Front package photo by Check Six. Back package photo by George Hall/Check Six.

Special thanks to George Hall and John Skeel.

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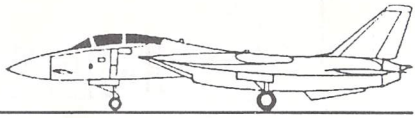


Dynamix Team TOMCAT . . . where there is no room for Whiskey Deltas.

Kevin Ryan. Also known as "Mr. Chips," Kevin designed TOMCAT while a close friend attended A.O.C.S.. His solid, quiet, consistent performance was often punctuated by the cry "Piece of cake!"

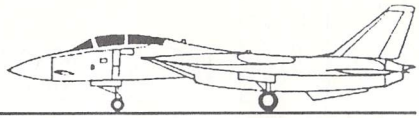
John Burton. Artist and frustrated flyer, John probably had the most fun with TOMCAT, knowing it was the closest he would ever get to being a jet jockey.

Mike Edwards. When the ---- gets thick, you launch the ALERT-5 Programmer. Mike is there—ready, willing, and able, unless he has disc in hand and is heading for the links.

Cyrus Kanga. In between dates and grabbing a cold one downstairs, Cyrus has spearheaded a movement that has redefined the envelope of 3-space artwork at Dynamix.

Mark Brenneman. "The Coiler" heads up half of the Dynamix 3-space art strike force, with an artistic smoothness rivaled only by the singing of Joe Williams.

Thanks to Nick Skrepetos and Tom Collie.



F-14 TOMCAT

Pilot's Briefing

U.S. Navy carrier-based jet fighter pilots are a rare breed. Only a select few qualify, and only the best of these excel at modern, high-speed aerial combat. An F-14 TOMCAT pilot must be ready at any time to catapult from the deck of a pitching carrier in choppy seas and fly straight into a no-holds-barred dogfight.

Enlist in the best Flight Training in the world. Learn and practice basic flight maneuvers and advanced combat maneuvers, then move on to Advanced Jet Training and practice dogfights against a challenging instructor. He'll give you a nickname that will stick with you throughout your career. The question is, will you be a "Deadeye" or a "Potato-Bug"?

When you're reassigned to Final Training, the dogfights are that much closer to the real thing. A Radar Intercept Officer helps you take on a tough opponent in a best-two-out-of-three. Carry the day and be reassigned to one of the two TOMCAT fighter groups stationed on U.S. aircraft carriers—the Jolly Rogers or the Black Aces.

When you're ready to begin your first tour of duty, Admiral Hawk, a grizzled flight veteran, will brief you before each mission—and debrief you afterwards. Though the types of missions and battle instructions vary, they share one common purpose: defense of the Free World.

If you do well enough on carrier duty, you'll qualify for Top Gun School, where you'll match your stuff against the Navy's best. These fights test your mettle; at the end of Top Gun School, you're ready for a return to active duty.

In the course of your career, there'll be a chance for R & R. You'll travel to some choice locations to rest up for a return to duty. By the time you're ready for retirement, you should have accumulated a stock of medals, patches, and memories to pull you through those sleepless nights when you close your eyes and hear the familiar roar of those Pratt & Whitney turbo-fans. An F-14 TOMCAT pilot wouldn't settle for anything less.

Getting Started

MS-DOS players—see page 8.

Commodore

You can play *F-14 TOMCAT* on a Commodore 64 or Commodore 128 computer. In either case, you'll need a joystick. You use the joystick to control your plane, to highlight and select menu items, and to respond to prompts on the screen (for example, when you've just changed game disks and want to continue play).

Your *F-14 TOMCAT* package includes two two-sided game disks. You load Disk 1, side 1 to begin play. At different points during play, you'll be prompted to insert sides 2, 3, or 4.

You'll also need a blank disk to use as a data disk to record your flying career. Each time you select **Continue Career** or **Save** from the Options Menu, you'll be prompted to insert this data disk. You may save up to 14 separate careers on a single disk.

Loading the Game on a C64

To begin play, follow these steps:

1. Plug your joystick into port 2.
2. Turn on your disk drive, monitor, and computer.
3. Insert Disk 1, side 1 up, in the disk drive.
4. Type **LOAD "*",8,1** and press **Return**.

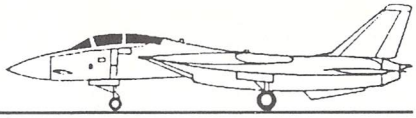
Loading the Game on a C128

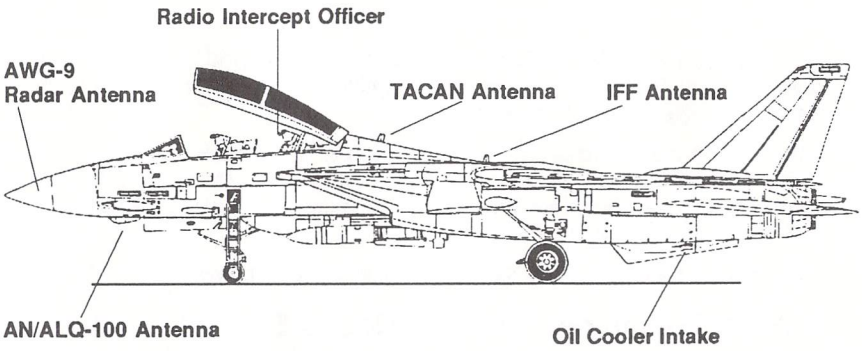
To begin play, follow these steps:

1. Turn on your disk drive.
2. Insert Disk 1, side 1 up, in the disk drive.
3. Plug your joystick into port 2.
4. Turn on your computer. The game loads automatically.

Wait for the title screen and credits to appear. Press the joystick fire button to exit to the **Aircraft Identification** screen, where you'll see a part of the aircraft, a weapon, or a member of the flight crew highlighted.

To continue play, use the joystick to highlight the correct name of the item indicated on the screen, then press the fire button to select that name. Use the illustration on the next page as your guide.





AIM-9 Sidewinder

AIM-120 AMRAAM

AIM-54 Phoenix

M61A1 Vulcan Cannon

AWG-9: nose
TACAN Antenna: top, behind canopy
IFF Antenna: top, mid fuselage
AN-ALQ100 Antenna: bottom, behind nose
RIO: cockpit back seat
Oil Cooler Intake: bottom, rear
Ground Crew Uniforms:
Brown - Plane Captains
White - Safety Officer
Yellow - Flight Deck Officer
Red - Weapons
Purple - Refueler
Green - Catapult Crew

If you correctly identify the highlighted item, the Main Menu appears. If you incorrectly identify the highlighted item, you'll be quickly enlisted and just as quickly discharged for conduct unbecoming an officer. When this happens, you'll have to turn off your computer and load the game again.

MS-DOS

You can play *F-14 TOMCAT* using a joystick or mouse and the keyboard, or the keyboard only, to control your plane, to highlight and select menu items, and to respond to prompts on the screen.

Unless you have a hard drive, it's a good idea to make back-up copies of your original *F-14 TOMCAT* disks before playing, and to use these disks to play the game. You'll need two blank disks. When playing, you'll also need a blank data disk to record your flying career.

If you have a hard drive, see "Hard Drive Installation," below.

Making Copies on a Double Floppy System

1. Boot your system and load DOS.
2. At the **A>** prompt, type diskcopy **A: B:** and press **Enter**.
3. Follow the screen prompts—the source disk is your original *F-14 TOMCAT* disk and the target disk is the blank disk.
4. Repeat this procedure for each original *F-14 TOMCAT* disk.

Making Copies on a Single Floppy System

1. Boot your system and load DOS.
2. At the **A>** prompt, type **diskcopy A: A:** and press **Enter**.
3. Follow the screen prompts—the source disk is your original *F-14 TOMCAT* disk and the target disk is a blank disk.

Loading on a Floppy-Drive System

1. Boot your system and load DOS.

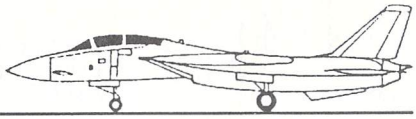
3. Insert your backup copy of the *F-14 TOMCAT* disk 1 in the A drive.

4. Type **A:** and press **Enter**, if necessary, to get to the **A>** prompt. At the **A>** prompt, type **tomcat** and press **Enter** and wait for the program to load.

You'll be prompted to swap disks as the game progresses.

Hard Drive Installation

1. Boot your system and load DOS.
2. At the command prompt, type **A:** to access your A drive.
3. Insert your *F-14 TOMCAT* disk 1 in the A drive.
4. Type **install C:** (according to your hard drive's letter designation), and press **Enter**.



5. The program automatically creates a new directory called **tomcat** on your hard drive, and copies the contents of the disk to this new directory.
6. You'll be prompted to replace disk 1 with disk 2 and disk 2 with disk 3. After doing so, press any key.

Starting Play on a Hard Drive

1. At the command prompt for your hard drive (for example, **C:**), type **cd tomcat** and press **Enter**.
2. Once you're in the **tomcat** directory, type **tomcat** and press **Enter**.

The Main Menu

At the Main Menu, select one of the following options:

Enlist. Highlight and select **Enlist** to enter the Navy's Flight Training program as an Ensign. You must enlist if you wish to build a career as an F-14 TOMCAT pilot, beginning with Basic Flight Training and culminating in your wings of gold.

Continue Career. Highlight and select **Continue Career** if you wish to resume a career previously saved on your data disk.

Fly Mission. Highlight and select **Fly Mission** to fly a single combat mission against intruders in one of 80 world hot spots. **Note:** You do not need to enlist or begin a career in order to select **Fly Mission**—you'll skip the preliminaries and go directly into combat (but as a consequence you will *not* be able to save the results on your data disk).

Your Aircraft and Your Opponents

The F-14 TOMCAT is the premier carrier-based fighter in the U.S. Navy's arsenal, capable of quick take-offs, spectacular aerial maneuvers, and swift, deadly attacks. The TOMCAT pilot has multiple weapons systems and defense systems, known as Electronic Counter-Measures (ECMs), at his disposal to foil an enemy's attack, plus the speed to break off an engagement when necessary.

A pilot and an RIO (Radar Intercept Officer) make up the flight crew of the F-14 TOMCAT. Your support crew on a carrier includes a Safety Officer, Flight Deck Officer, Weapons Officer, and Refueling and Catapult specialists.

Joystick Controls–Commodore

You use a joystick along with the keyboard to control your plane. Pull back on the joystick when you're ready to lift off a runway. In flight, move the joystick in the direction you want the plane to fly. Push the stick forward to push the nose down, pull it back to pull the nose up, push the joystick left to roll the TOMCAT left, and push it right to roll right.

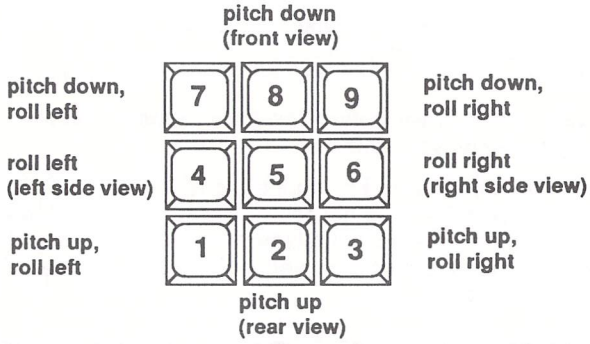
To fire an active weapon at a selected target, press the joystick fire button.

Joystick, Mouse, and Keypad Controls—MS-DOS

If you have a joystick or mouse, you may use it along with the keyboard to control your plane. It works just like a joystick on a Commodore computer, described in the preceding section, with two additions. First, pressing the second joystick or mouse button changes the active weapon selection on your craft. Second, you must use the keypad, as shown in the drawing below, to change outside views from your cockpit.

If you have no joystick or mouse, use the numeric keypad as shown below to control your plane. Use the keypad in conjunction with the **num lock** key to change outside views from the cockpit.

Numeric Keypad Controls

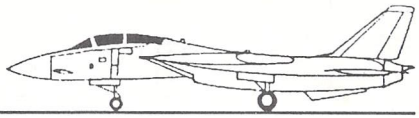


Use keypad keys with num lock key depressed to change cockpit views as indicated in parentheses.

Aircraft Controls—All Systems

In addition to the basic joystick and/or keypad controls, you use the keys listed below to control the F-14 TOMCAT and its systems. **Note:** When you fly training missions (in Basic Flight Training), only the rudder, thrust, joystick inputs, equals key, and Automatic Landing System (ALS) are active.

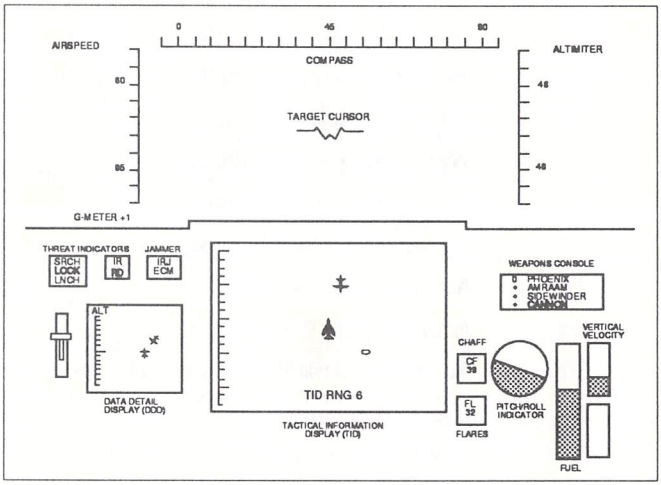
MS-DOS	Commodore	
+	+	Increases thrust. When thrust is already at the maximum, engages afterburn.
A	£	Achieves full thrust (afterburn).
-	-	Decreases thrust.



MS-DOS	Commodore	
N/A	<	Left rudder.
N/A	>	Right rudder.
N	Commodore Key	Displays overview map.
P	P	Pauses game. Press again to resume.
3	1	Requests permission to fire.
4	2	Requests vector home.
5	3	Warns away enemy aircraft.
6	4	Requests range to target.
F1	F1	Activates AIM-54 Phoenix.
F2	F3	Activates AIM-120 AMRAAM.
F3	F5	Activates AIM-9 Sidewinder.
F4	F7	Activates M61AI Vulcan Cannon.
F5	C	Drops chaff decoy.
F6	F	Drops flare decoy.
E	E	Ejects pilot.
1, 2	Cursor left/right	Changes TID range: 6/12/25/50/100 nautical miles.
F7, F8	Cursor up/down	Changes TID mode: Search/ACM/Launch.
Space	Space	Selects next target for TID.
H	H	Toggles HUD Display.
V	=	Lines TOMCAT up with runway when facing the runway or carrier.
Enter	Return	Activates Automatic Landing System (ALS) when even with the horizon.

Cockpit Controls

The cockpit controls should become second nature to the aspiring F-14 TOMCAT pilot. Refer to the illustration below as you read about the TOMCAT's attack and defense capabilities.



Heads Up Display

The HUD (Heads Up Display) displays continuously updated flight and weapons launch solutions on the inside of the plane's canopy. This enables the pilot to obtain critical information during combat situations, without having to look away from his target. Normally, the HUD shows the TOMCAT's relative airspeed, compass bearing, and altitude. During combat, the HUD displays target acquisition, tracking, and missile lock information. Combat information is displayed in one of three ways, depending upon which type of weapon is active and whether the TOMCAT's AWG-9 radar has achieved a target lock-on. Following is a description of each of the HUD's functions:

Altimeter. Displays the F-14's current altitude in hundreds of feet.

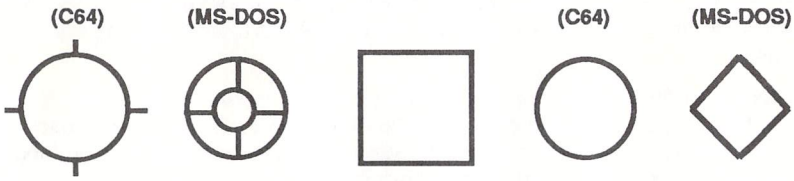
Compass. Shows the TOMCAT's current compass heading.

Airspeed Indicator. Displays the F-14's relative airspeed in tens of knots.

G-Meter. Displays the amount of gravitational force being exerted on the F-14 and the pilot. Excessive positive or negative Gs may cause a pilot to black-out or red-out.

Target Cursor. During combat, the target cursor indicates weapon targeting. It

shows a target when tracked (a white square) and when locked in (a black circle); a gunsight appears when you select the aircraft's cannon as your weapon (see "Available Weapons," below).



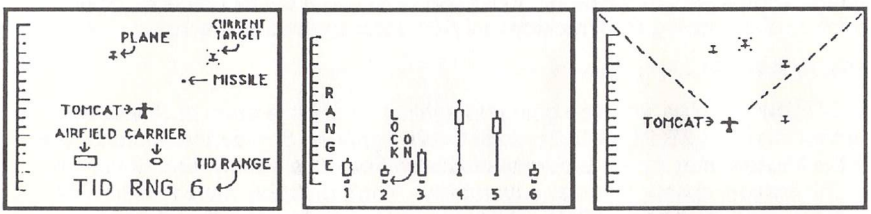
Gunsight | Missile Tracking | Missile Locked

Data Detail Display

The DDD (Data Detail Display) indicates the orientation of the plane that is currently being tracked by the fire control radar with respect to the TOMCAT. The stationary plane icon in the center of the console represents the F-14. The bar graph marked "ALT" shows whether the other plane is above or below the TOMCAT.

Tactical Information Display

The TID (Tactical Information Display) shows data from the F-14's AWG-9 radar in three ways. In Search Mode, the TID indicates the postion of targets (both ground and air) relative to true north and the TOMCAT. The fighter's radar can be set to scan ranges of 6, 12, 25, 50, and 100 nautical miles in Search Mode. The second method of display, Launch Zone, is primarily used with the long-range AIM-54 Phoenix missile for BVR (Beyond Visual Range) targets. In Air Combat Maneuver Mode, the TID shows the orientation of other planes relative to the TOMCAT. This mode is most often used for close-range dogfighting.



TID Search Mode | TID Launch Zone | TID AOM Mode

Pitch/Roll Indicator

As you fly, the pitch/roll indicator at the bottom right of the screen gives you an accurate picture of your TOMCAT's position relative to the ground (or water).

Available Weapons

The weapons console displays the weapons options a TOMCAT pilot may select during combat. At the start of a mission, one of the weapons is highlighted. Use the **F1, F3, F5,** or **F7** key (Commodore) or **F1, F2, F3,** or **F4** key (MS-DOS) to activate a different weapons system. The F-14 TOMCAT has three missile systems:

Phoenix. Use the Phoenix for long-range combat of more than 31 miles. The F-14 TOMCAT is the only plane armed with the Phoenix missile. The Phoenix missile system can track up to six targets simultaneously and features the longest tracking distance of any airborne system in the world.

AMRAAM. Use the AMRAAM for ranges between 11 and 31 miles.

Sidewinder. Use the Sidewinder for short-range attacks under 11 miles.

Vulcan Cannon. This is your weapon of choice for close-in dogfighting.

Threat Indicators

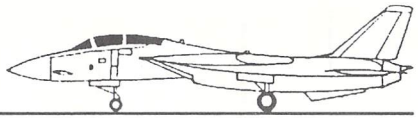
The F-14 is equipped with two threat detection devices. One determines the nature of the threat (heat-seeking (IR) or radar-guided (RD) missile), and the other detects the type of emission from enemy tracking radars. The radar emission detector determines if hostile radars are searching for the TOMCAT, whether they have achieved a missile lock, or if they have launched a weapon at the fighter. The appropriate messages are highlighted on the threat indicator panel to the left of the TID.

Defensive Countermeasures

The TOMCAT has two defensive countermeasures to use against enemy weapons systems. It can fire chaff rockets to confuse radar-guided weapons, or it can drop flares to create a false target for heat-seeking missiles. Jamming status is displayed on the panel above the DDD (Data Detail Display). The number of remaining chaff rockets and flares is displayed to the right of the TID.

Enemy Aircraft

As a TOMCAT pilot, you'll be going up against a versatile array of Soviet-built aircraft like the MIG 21, MIG 25, and MIG 29 fighters. Some of the hotshot pilots in the Mideast may fly the U.S.-manufactured F-4. The enemy aircraft vary in sophistication, speed, and maneuverability. You'll probably have less trouble with the lower-numbered MIGs, which are earlier models and therefore less advanced. As you go up against the later-model Soviet craft, you'll need to call upon all of your skills.



Flight Training

Every ensign prepares for his career as a Navy carrier pilot with a three-phase Flight Training program. You start with the basics and proceed to advanced training, learning the essentials along the way. From your first solo flight, in which you practice attaining headings and altitudes, you move on to air combat maneuvers and simulated dogfights.

Basic Flight Training

Your performance in Basic Flight Training determines whether you become a jet fighter pilot, or settle for helicopter or propeller duty. Execute all assigned tasks to the best of your ability. To enter Basic Flight Training, follow this procedure:

1. At the Main Menu, move the arrow to **Enlist** and press the fire button.
2. The Navy Aviation Officer Program Application appears. Type in a name of up to 16 characters (8 characters on MS-DOS computers), then press **Return**.
3. Watch the on-screen graphics as you pass Boot Camp.
4. Follow the on-screen instructions.
5. Read your Commanding Officer's instructions for your first flight in Basic Flight Training.

You're ready for your first of three flights in a T-2 Buckeye. Your home base is Whiting Naval Air Station, and your CO (Commanding Officer) is the moustachioed guy jawing at you on the runway. Remember, from the minute you take to the air in the T-2, your CO is grading your performance. Only *he* decides which "pipeline" you're routed into at the end of Basic Training, so aim to please.

Altitudes and Headings

On the first flight, you're rated on your ability to achieve the various altitudes and headings your CO radios to you. Follow the on-screen instructions, then bring the T-2 in. You can line up the plane with the horizon and press **Return** to execute an automatic landing; however, if you land the plane manually, you'll get a higher flight rating.

Basic Flight Maneuvers

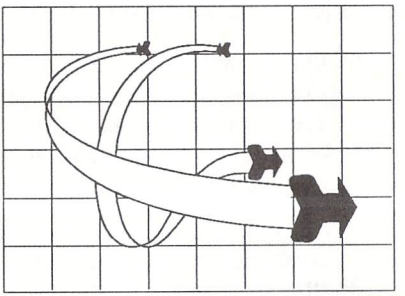
Back at Whiting, you'll receive instructions for your second flight in Basic Training. This time, you'll be trailing your CO as he performs a series of basic flight maneuvers.

During the flight, you're automatically lined up behind your instructor as he begins each maneuver. Watch the joystick indicator at screen left and follow your instructor's lead line through each of the first maneuvers.

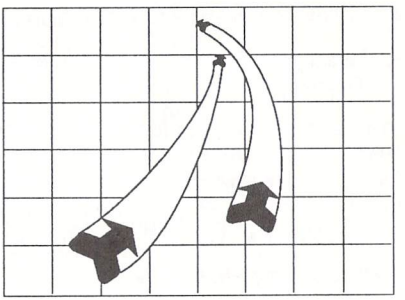
Commodore only: An Instant Replay lets you review your performance after each maneuver—watch the joystick indicator at screen left to review your actual joystick movements during the maneuver just completed. Again, keep in mind that your performance here affects your eventual pipeline assignment.

The four basic maneuvers are:

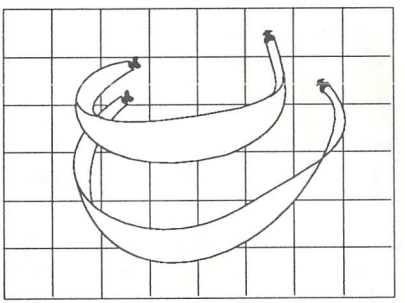
Low-G Yo-Yo. Dive down to increase your airspeed as you pursue a faster aircraft. Once you increase your speed, pull your nose up to lock on the enemy.

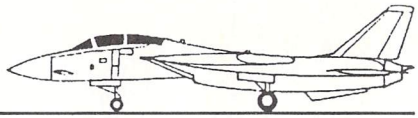


Break. Bank sharply and fly with your wing pointed to the ground, then right yourself. The idea is to reduce your forward airspeed and get the opposing pilot to overshoot.

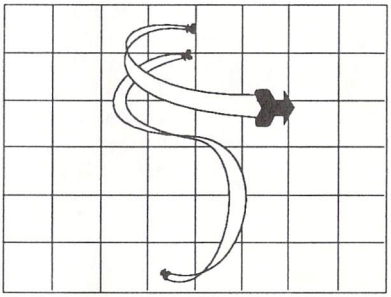


Spiral Dive. Evade an attacker by pointing your nose earthward and increasing your speed to pull away from danger.





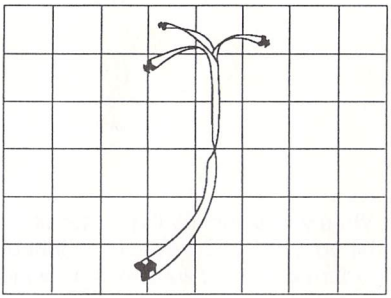
Split-S. As the defender, you invert your flight and dive vertically, pulling out in the opposite direction from your attacker. This upsets his angle of attack and sets up yours.



When you've viewed the Instant Replay of the Split-S maneuver, you're ready to come home. Your CO offers you the chance to go up again. Press the fire button to try again, or move the joystick to the right and press the button if you're ready to move on to Air Combat Maneuvers.

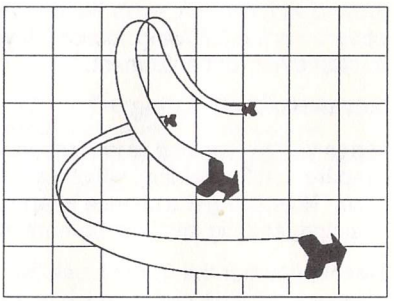
Air Combat Maneuvers

Once again, you're positioned behind the instructor as he gets ready to execute the first of four advanced maneuvers. They are:

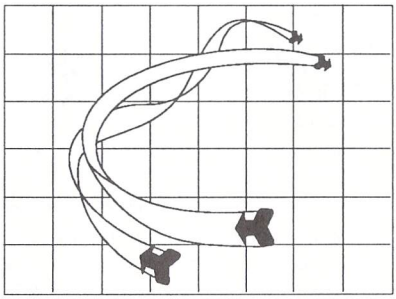


Immelmann. Change headings by pulling into the vertical axis, rotating your craft within the vertical axis, then lowering the nose into a new heading. This saves distance over the horizontal plane.

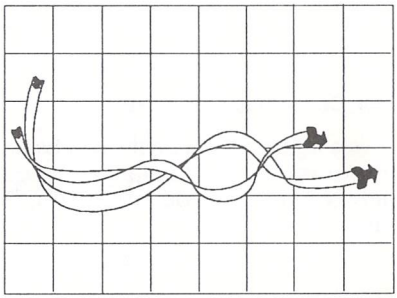
High-G Yo-Yo. Climb to slow your airspeed when you're in danger of overshooting on attack run. Bank slightly as you climb, then push the nose back to horizontal.



Barrel Roll. In the defender's role, you first break, then roll in the direction opposite the break. The barrel roll is designed to lure an attacker to overfly you when he's in a high angle-off posture. Execute this move properly, and he'll fly right on by.



Scissors. A series of alternating breaks that slows your plane. The objective is to make an attacker lose his forward airspeed and stall.



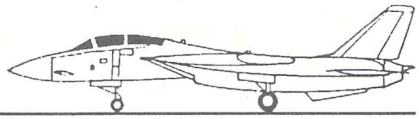
When you complete the Air Combat Maneuvers, land again at Whiting. You have the option to go up again and improve your score. If you're satisfied with your performance and want to know which pipeline is yours, elect not to fly the maneuvers again.

Now your CO gives you an overall Basic Flight Training rating. If you've performed well enough, you'll head to Advanced Jet Training at Pensacola, which is covered in the following section. If you're assigned to props or helos, you'll have to start over from enlistment.

Advanced Jet Training

When you're reassigned to Pensacola, your CO greets you and begins to prepare you for training, which consists of a simulated dogfight against Captain Vice. Now you get a chance to apply the lessons you learned in Basic Flight Training, and dig into your combat maneuver repertoire.

Neither you nor the Captain use live ammo—ground control informs you of hits or misses—but your performance counts.



The Captain will let you know when the fight's on, and it'll be over when a hit is scored. Then you'll return to land on the *U.S.S. Lexington.*

If all goes well, you'll receive your wings of gold and a promotion to Lieutenant Junior Grade. But it's likely you'll remember most the nickname that Captain Vice awards you at the end of your dogfight. If you're good, he might call you "Foxhound" or "Jester" or "Stiletto." Lose the fight, and you'll end up as a "Flounder," "Lemming," or "Twinkletoes." But you'll have to learn to live with your new moniker—it's going to stick with you the rest of your flying career.

Final Training

You're now reassigned to Miramar Naval Air Station for final training. You arrive at Miramar with your new rank, your wings, and a colorful nickname.

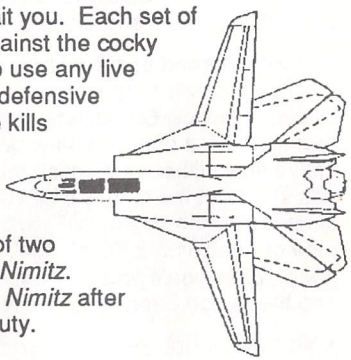
The Options Menu

The Options Menu appears for the first time when you reach Miramar. On this menu, you can choose to **Continue**, **Review Current Record**, **Review Saved Record**, **Save Career**, **Exit to Main Menu**, or **Format a Data Disk** (Commodore only).

If this is your first enlistment, you'll probably want to review your current record at this point, then select **Save Career**. You'll first need a blank disk to format for use as a data disk—you'll save your career (or careers) on this data disk from now on.

At Miramar, you polish your craft with the able assistance of the VF-124 Gunfighters. Here you're assigned an RIO (Radar Intercept Officer) who'll be your partner from now on. Your RIO settles into the back seat and advises you on tracking and tactics. He's got years of experience, so pay attention to his advice.

Nine months of one-on-one dogfighting await you. Each set of dogfights consists of three engagements against the cocky James "Bones" Coyle. You won't be able to use any live ammo or any of your TOMCAT's electronic defensive measures when you fly against Bones. The kills are simulated. But the feel is of real air combat.



The trick here is to win two out of three matchups. Then you'll be assigned to one of two elite Navy fighter groups aboard the *U.S.S. Nimitz.* **Note**: You'll also be assigned to the *U.S.S. Nimitz* after you've completed two land-based tours of duty.

Tours of Duty

You've finished your Final Training at Miramar, demonstrating your prowess against the Navy's top aerial instructors. You've travelled through the pipeline, gaining valuable experience along the way. Hours at the control of an F-14 TOMCAT have justified your CO's original decision to train you as a jet pilot. You join one of two elite Navy fighter squadrons—the Jolly Rogers or the Black Aces. Now, with reassignment to the carrier *Nimitz*, you're ready to begin your first tour of duty.

First, the Options Menu appears with its six items. You may want to save your career or review your record at this point. Follow the on-screen instructions.

The nature of each mission varies according to its location, the overall crisis situation, and the number and intent of the enemy. Admiral Hawk may give you permission to fire at will if war has broken out and the *Nimitz* is likely to be attacked. If, however, the *Nimitz* is only monitoring a crisis situation, you may be instructed not to fire unless fired upon.

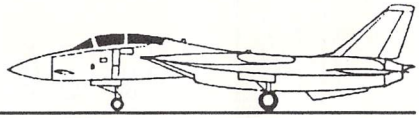
If you violate your orders, you're likely to receive a severe reprimand at the end of the mission—or even be stripped of your wings. That's not to say that an overzealous pilot is punished without warning—your RIO will let you know when you're overstepping your bounds. But screw up again and you're likely to hear Hawk's bellowing tones on your radio.

There are several ways you can end a mission. Here are the most likely scenarios:

- **You accomplish your mission**—whether it's warning away intruders or knocking them out of the sky. You'll land, and you'll be debriefed. Hawk may even recommend you for a medal or promotion. Return to the Options Menu and make a selection.

- **You're forced to eject during flight.** You'd better hope that one of the *Nimitz*'s helicopters rescues you. If you're rescued, you'll go before a Review Board, whose members will evaluate your decision to "punch out." If they decide your ejection was justified, you'll return to active duty without a blemish on your record. If you bailed out when you shouldn't have, they'll let you know. Any time you bail out, there's a chance that the enemy will capture you. If you should have the misfortune of becoming a POW, don't despair. Your chances of rescue are good. Plus, you'll probably get some media coverage, since Chet Charles and the Action Evening News team like to keep up with world events.

- **You mess up.** Assuming you get home in one piece, you'll get an earful from Admiral Hawk, especially if you violated the rules of engagement or allowed a bogey to score a hit on the *Nimitz*. Just hope that Hawk doesn't strip you of your wings.



- **You die in action.** OK, so it's not what you had in mind. But it *is* a possibility. At least you can always start *F-14 TOMCAT* over, and learn from your mistakes—even the fatal ones.

R & R

Every fighter pilot needs a break from the action once in a while. After you've been on duty for an extended period, you go on R & R. At the end of R & R, you return to Miramar for a refresher course, and then resume your tour of duty.

Top Gun School

Top Gun School is the goal of every Navy fighter pilot, the place where you can match your skills against the best of the best. This is one school where class is conducted outdoors—in the blue sky.

To be eligible for Top Gun School, you must be at least 28 years of age (you start a tour of duty at age 21) and possess a rating of 85 or over. You're pitted against your classmates in several rounds of dogfights that test your combat-hardened skills. After each round, your cumulative score is ranked among your classmates' scores.

When you return to active duty, your mission level of difficulty reflects the respect you've earned.

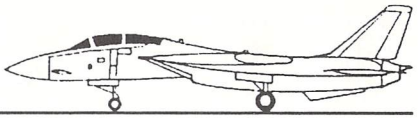
Ranks and Medals

An industrious F-14 TOMCAT pilot should rise through the ranks and accumulate some worthy medals before he retires.

Rank	Stage
Ensign	Training
Lieutenant, Junior Grade	Receive Wings
Lieutenant	Age 24/Rating of 80 or 23/99
Lieutenant Commander	Age 27/Rating 80 or 26/95
Commander	Age 30/Rating 84 or 28/95
Captain	Age 33/Rating 90 or 30/98

Retirement

Although they don't talk about it in Flight School, retirement is something every pilot must face. When you're stationed with your squadron on board the *Nimitz*, it's probably the last thing on your mind. But everybody gets old eventually, so don't feel bad when it's your turn. If you've had an illustrious career and earned the reputation of a Top Gun ace, you may be invited to become a Top Gun instructor.



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